

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5741

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SOPN, PE, PINR  
SUBJECT: GOP NAMES NEW DIRECTOR OF "EL COMERCIO"

SUMMARY. LIMA PRESS JUNE 27 ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF DR. JUAN JOSE VEGA AS DIRECTOR OF GOP-CONTROLLED "EL COMERCIO" VICE ALFONO TEALDO SIMI. A DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR, JORNALIST AND HISTORIAN, VEGA COMES TO "EL COMERCIO" AFTER A VERY SUCCESSFUL STINT AS DIRECTOR "EXPRESO" AND "EXTRA". THIS APPOINTMENT MAY BE A HARBINER OF IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE GOP-CONTROLLED DAILIES WHICH ALLEGEDLY ARE BEING CONSIDERED BY THE GOP. END SUMMARY.

1. OFFICIAL GAZETTE "EL PERUANO" JUNE 27 ANNOUNCES THAT THE GOP HAS ACCEPTED THE "RESIGNATION" OF ALFONSO TEALDO SIMI, DIRECTOR OF THE DEAN OF THE LIMA PRESS "EL COMERICO" (FOUNDED IN 1839 AND UNTIL 1974 OWNED AND MANAGED BY THE MIRO QUESADA FAMILY). TEALDO HAS BEEN REPLACED BY DR. JUAN JOSE VEGA, DIRECTOR OF THE GOP-CONTROLLED DAILY "EXPRESO" AND ITS AFTERNOON TABLOID "EXTRA".

2. A LAWYER AND HISTORIAN BY TRAINING, VEGA HAS HAD A DISTINGUISHED CAREER IN JORNALISM, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS. BORN IN LIMA IN 1932, HE STUDIED AT THE "LEONCIO PRADO" MILITARY  
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SCHOOL AND RECEIVED A DOCTORATE IN LAW FROM SAN MARCOS UNIVERSITY, WHERE HE ALSO TAUGHT. VEGA WAS FOUNDING RECTOR (1967) OF THE NATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING UNIVERSITY ENRIQUE GUZMAN Y VALLE "LA CANTUTA" AND HAS TAUGHT AT FEDERICO VILLAREAL UNIVERSITY, THE SUPERIOR WAR SCHOOL, THE NAVY SCHOOL AND CAEM (CENTRO DE ALTOS ESTUDIOS MILITARES). HE WAS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE, DIRECTOR OF THE II REGION OF THE

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, DIRECTOR OF COORDINATION FOR UNIVERSITIES AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS (ALSO IN MIN. ED.), AND MAYOR OF THE LIMA SUBURB OF MIRAFLORES IN 1967. VEGA WAS ELECTED DEPUTY TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 1962, BUT THE ELECTION WAS ANNULLED BY A MILITARY COUP DESIGNED TO PREVENT THE ACCESSION OF HAYA DE LA TORRE TO THE PRESIDENCY.

3. VEGA'S CAREER IN JOURNALISM AND HIS ASSOCIATION WITH "EL COMERCIO" DATE FROM THE LATE 1950'S WHEN HE PROVIDED OCCASIONAL ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION. LATER HE WAS EDITOR OF THE SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT AND POLITICAL REPORTER. IN MARCH 1976 VEGA TOOK OVER THE DIRECTION OF "EXPRESO" AND "EXTRA", WHERE HE DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS ENERGETIC AND IMAGINATIVE, AND CLEANED OUT THE LEFTISTS THAT HAD ENSCONCED THEMSELVES IN THAT DAILY. HIS LITERARY OUTPUT HAS BEEN LARGELY IN THE HISTORICAL VEIN. (BEST KNOWN WORKS ARE "LA GUERRA DE LOS VIRACOCHAS", 1963, AND "TUPAC AMARU 1969") AND OF A MARKEDLY NATIONALISTIC TONE.

4. VEGA'S DISTINGUISHED CAREER IN EDUCATION, JOURNALISM AND LETTERS, AND PARTICULARLY HIS DIRECTION OF "EXPRESO" MADE HIM A LOGICAL CANDIDATE FOR THE "EL COMERCIO" SLOT. NOR DOES THE TIMING OF THE APPOINTMENT COME AS A SURPRISE. PRESS SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT GEN. JUAN ESTRADA BRACAMONTE, THE NEW HEAD OF SINADI (THE GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA AND INFORMATION AGENCY) HAS A LONG-STANDING GRUDGE WITH EX-"COMERCIO" DIRECTOR ALFONSO TEALDI SIMI, AND WAS WAITING FOR THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO DUMP

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HIM. FURTHERMORE. SINCE THE 1974 GOP TAKEOVER OF THE MAJOR NATIONAL DAILIES (WHICH RESULTED IN RIOTING IN MIRAFLORES, THE FIRST SERIOUS PUBLIC PROTEST AGAINST THE VELASCO REGIME) AN IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF THE PERUVIAN POPULATION HAS BEEN ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO GOP CONTROL OF AND INFLUENCE OVER THE MAJOR DAILIES. THIS OPPOSITION, AND A GROWING AWARENESS BY THE GOP THAT VELASCO'S ORIGINAL SCHEME TO TURN THE PAPERS OVER TO ORGANIZED SECTORS OF SOCIETY (PEASANTS IN THE CASE OF "EL COMERCIO") IS IMPOSSIBLE TO REALIZE AND THAT GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF THE PRESS IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD, HAS MADE IT IMPERATIVE THAT THE GOP DEFINE THE SITUATION OF THE NEWSPAPERS BEFORE THE ADVENT OF A CIVILIAN, CONSTITUTIONAL REGIME. PRESS SOURCES TELL US THAT THE GOP IS CURRENTLY STUDYING SEVERAL SCHEMES WHEREBY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD COMPENSATE THE FORMER OWNERS OF THE DAILIES (THE MIRO QUESADA'S OF "EL COMERCIO", PEDRO BELTRAN AND THE WORKERS COOP OF "LA PRENSA" ETC. PERHAPS WITH GOVERNMENT BONDS, MAKING THE EXPROPRIATION OF THE PAPERS (AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, OF THEIR LOG TYPES) COMPLETE. IN ONE VERSION THE GOP WOULD THEN OFFER FOR PUBLIC SALE ALL THE SHARES OF THE DAILIES, STRIVING TO ACHIEVE THE WIDEST DISTRIBUTION OF SHARES BUT RESERVING 20 PERCENT FOR THE INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL PAPERS. IN THIS SCHEME IT IS UNCERTAIN HOW THE WIDEST POSSIBLE DISTRIBUTION WOULD BE

ACHIEVED, OR WHETHER THE SHARES WOULD BE NON-TRANSFERABLE. IT IS ALSO UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE FORMER OWNERS OF THE PAPERS WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A SCHEME (ALL BUT "EL COMERCIO" HAVE RUN UP LARGE OPERATING DEBTS SINCE 1974). THE MIRO QUESADAS ALLEGEDLY ONLY WANT THEIR LOGO TYPE BACK. THE GOP ALLEGEDLY WOULD LIKE TO ANNOUNCE THE TRANSFER OF THE PAPERS BEFORE THE CONVENING OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, IN ORDER TO GET THE JUMP ON CRITICS OF THE REGIME'S CONTROL OF THE MEDIA. THUS, THE CHANGEOVER AT "EL COMERCIO" COULD BE A HARBINGER OF FUTURE CHANGE. ALREADY SENSED BY INDEPENDENT LEFTIST "MARKA" WHICH HAS SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE VEGA APPOINTMENT.  
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